

Start the Future Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Do you like starting new projects? Explain.
2. Do you like thinking about the future?

Read the following passage: Jeremiah 29:1-14.

Jeremiah ministered in the middle of chaos. Judah was a small nation surrounded by superpowers. When Jeremiah began to preach, sometime around 627 BC, Assyria's domination of the region was finally beginning to crumble. But Judah's problems were far from over. Egypt and Babylon were ready to fill the void. Judah's kings made one alliance after another in an attempt to survive. Eventually Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians attacked Jerusalem and deported massive numbers of Israelites.

These exiles lost everything they had ever known: Their land, their king, their temple, their homes. It is to these exiles that Jeremiah sent a message from God: "Build, plant, increase." Even though it might have felt like everything was over, God was telling them to start the future.

Questions for Discussion:

1. The Israelite exiles had their world turned upside down. What, for you, has been the most disorienting aspect of the season we have been in? Do you feel like you have lost some things, or put some areas of your life on pause? Explain.
2. Read Jeremiah 29:5-6. Why do you think God gave the Israelites these instructions? Generally speaking, what is God's purpose for our lives? What can you do to freshly engage that purpose?
3. Read Luke's description of the early church in Acts 2:42-47. Are there any practices mentioned here that would be helpful for you to start, or perhaps restart?
4. Read Jeremiah 29:7. Why might these have been difficult instructions for the Israelite exiles to hear? Do you find it difficult to turn your attention to the needs of others in this season? Explain. Why should we turn our arrows out anyway? Have you signed up for any of the opportunities to serve with Arrows Out?
5. What did Jeremiah say about the connection between the prosperity of the city the exiles were in and their own prosperity? What does this suggest about our tendency to have a very individualistic view of our well-being?

6. Have you been looking to God's Word for hope in this season? If so, what have you been reading?
7. What helps you stay focused and energized on seeking God? How will you seek God this week?

Pray